

Foreword to Yorkshire Rail Network Study reports

More people are using Yorkshire's rail network than at any time since the end of the Second World War. Even the recession and the sluggish economic recovery have not stopped this growth. Recent years have seen growth in rail freight too. The benefits for Yorkshire are very significant: fewer cars and lorries on our roads, lower emissions of carbon dioxide and other pollutants, and importantly, growth in jobs and services in Leeds and Sheffield City Regions and elsewhere that simply would not have happened if people couldn't travel by train.

Because of the way rail supports the development of Yorkshire's economy we need to see this growth continue. But passengers on their journeys to and from work travel on crowded trains every day. Some trains are crowded at other times of the day too. Yorkshire has some of the oldest and poorest quality trains operating anywhere in the country. While some routes have fast and frequent services, others are slow and infrequent. We need to see more freight on the railway. For rail to continue to grow and for Yorkshire to enjoy the economic benefits of that growth, we have to see investment to allow more trains to run, to speed up journeys, to have better stations, to have longer trains and to have new and better carriages.

The good news is that investment is coming. By the end of this decade investment in the Northern Hub will mean that more trains will be able to run from Yorkshire over the Pennines. The Government has announced that the route between York, Leeds and Manchester will be electrified and the route between Sheffield and Manchester improved. We're building new stations and improving existing ones. By 2033, high speed rail will slash journey times from Leeds and Sheffield to London as well as providing substantial additional capacity,

This is all good news, but it is not yet enough. If Yorkshire is to have the passenger and freight railway it needs for our economy to grow and meet its full potential, we need to continue to invest during the rest of this decade and we need a clear investment programme for the 2020s. This is why the Leeds and Sheffield City Regions have come together and commissioned this study. Its purpose is to look ahead and see what potential additional benefits rail investment can bring to the Yorkshire economy. What the study shows is that this is very significant: up to £12bn of economic benefits from improved connectivity and greater capacity. Armed with this knowledge we can target investment to the best effect.

The challenge is now for the Government and the railway industry to work with us and find affordable and cost effective ways of delivering as much of these benefits as possible. On behalf of the Leeds and Sheffield City Regions we now call on

- The Government to take the necessary steps to ensure the pending High Level Output Specification document considers the outputs of the study, in the context of a broader economic strategy for the North.
- The Government to take account of the outputs of the study when considering the investment case for rail enhancements proposed for Yorkshire in the next investment period from 2014 to 2019 (known as 'Control Period 5')
- Network Rail to use resources from its Control Period 5 settlement to undertake a phase 2 of the study which to assess each route in Yorkshire and identify preferred, costed and value-for-money options for a phased implementation programme in Control Period 6 (2019-2024)



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mick Jameson".

Councillor Mick Jameson, Chair of South Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority



A handwritten signature in brown ink that reads "James Lewis".

Councillor James Lewis, Chair of West Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority